FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 24, 2008

CONTACT: MARILYN WILSON 615.507.6450 (OFFICE) 615.969.2619 (MOBILE)

## TENN. HOSPITALS, CLINICS TO GET \$4.4 MILLION IN U.S. GRANTS DAVIDSON COUNTY CLINICS AND HOSPITALS TO RECEIVE NEARLY \$1.4 MILLION

NASHVILLE – Tennessee hospitals and clinics will receive \$4.4 million in federal grants to help improve access to primary medical care for TennCare members in an effort to avoid unnecessary emergency room visits. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services awarded Tennessee the fourth highest grant amount out of \$50 million shared among 20 state Medicaid programs. The grants will be administered by the TennCare program.

Nashville Medical Home Connection, a TennCare partnership between AmeriChoice, United Neighborhood Health Services and Davidson County Hospitals that include: Baptist Hospital, HCA Hospitals, Metro General Hospital, St. Thomas Hospital, Vanderbilt Adult Hospital and Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, will receive \$1,354,124 over two years. The goal of the partnership is to link TennCare members with a medical home and reinforce the importance of the doctor/patient relationship.

"TennCare is excited to be able to relay these dollars directly to local communities," said Dr. Wendy Long, TennCare's chief medical officer. "It will allow clinics and hospital emergency rooms to provide appropriate medical access points to our members by treating patients in the setting that best meets their health needs."

Specifically, the Nashville Medical Home Connection grant will expand access to walk-in and next-day appointments for non-emergent healthcare services. TennCare members will have the opportunity to access medical services through one of the hospital or community-based health center clinics that will operate seven days a week with extended hours.

"Every patient needs an ongoing relationship with a primary care provider, and these funds will support that concept," said Long. "An emergency room is simply not the right place to treat chronic health conditions or non-urgent health problems."

Two more regional grant projects also received funding. A partnership between the Hardeman County Community Health Center and Haywood Park Community Hospital will receive \$750,000 over two years, and \$2,368,116 will go to support an initiative with Volunteer State Health Plan, Erlanger Health System and its two federally qualified health centers.

TennCare is Tennessee's managed-care Medicaid program, serving approximately 1.2 million low-income children, pregnant women and disabled Tennesseans, with an annual budget of \$7 billion.

###

310 Great Circle Road Nashville, Tennessee 37243 615.507.6000